



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WWII MISSING IN ACTION SERVICEMAN IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. Army Air Forces crewman have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with military honors.

Staff Sergeant Robert W. McKee of Garvey, Calif., will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery on April 12.

On Dec. 17, 1944, McKee was an aerial gunner on an 11-member crew of a B-24L *Liberator* that took off from Pantanella, Italy, on a mission to bomb enemy targets near Blechhammer, Germany. The aircraft crashed over Hungary, near the small towns of Böhönye and Felsőseged, with the loss of two crewmen including McKee. The other nine were able to safely parachute from the aircraft. Following the war, the remains of the other unaccounted-for crewman were found in a cemetery in Felsőseged.

Following the war, remains from an American aircraft crash near Vienna, Austria, were found buried with McKee's military identification tag. But the remains were identified as those of another flyer. Further analysis revealed that McKee had flown on the same plane and had lost his identification tag, most likely on that aircraft.

In 1992 an undertaker recovered remains believed to be those of an American in the Böhönye, Hungary, cemetery but they could not be associated with a specific incident. But in 2003, DPMO analysts obtained information from a Hungarian researcher which indicated that the remains might be associated with McKee's loss. Aerial gunner's wings were found in the grave, as well as other items worn by U.S. bomber crews in 1944.

Scientists of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used a number of forensic tools including mitochondrial DNA to confirm Staff Sergeant McKee's identity, matching his DNA with that of two known maternal relatives.

Of the 88,000 Americans missing from all conflicts, 78,000 are from World War II.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo, or call 703-699-1169.

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